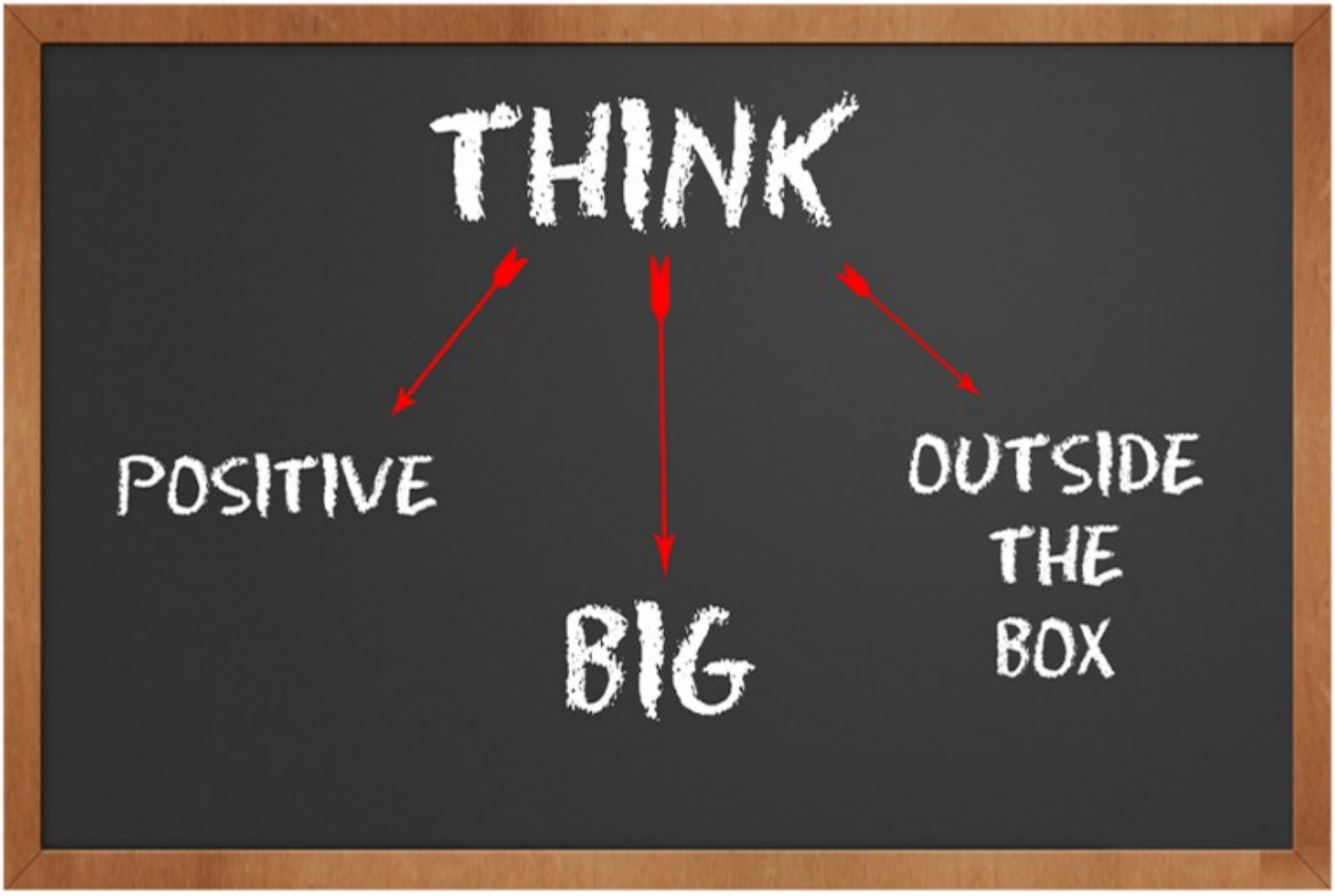
bookboon.com

Creating an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Failure IS an Option!

Roger Cowdrey MIBC



Download free books at
bookboon.com

Roger Cowdrey MIBC

Creating an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Failure IS an Option!

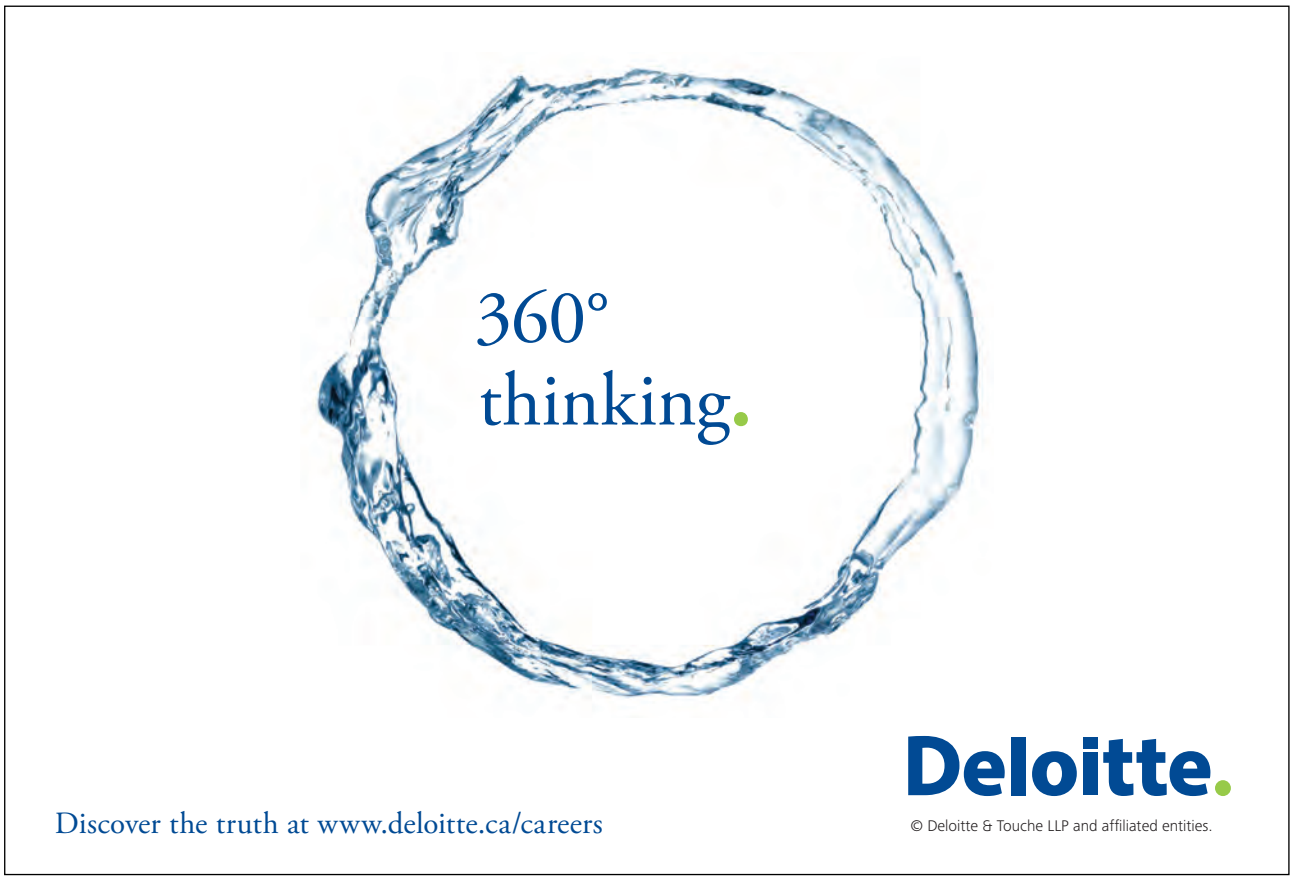
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Creating an Entrepreneurial Mindset: Failure IS an Option!
First edition
© 2012 Roger Cowdrey MIBC & bookboon.com
ISBN 9978-87-403-0310-0

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Contents

1	What is an Entrepreneur?	5
2	What stops people behaving in an entrepreneurial way?	13
3	How entrepreneurial are you?	20
4	Developing a clear vision	25
5	Building skills to implement the vision	43
6	Entrepreneurship in action	50
7	Conclusion	53
8	References	57



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

1 What is an Entrepreneur?

In reading this book it is important that you understand the basis on which this book is offered. My background is extremely varied and some would argue that it has elements of entrepreneurship within it. It encompasses the formal academic training of youth, five years as a classroom teacher, twenty years within a large multi-national and nearly twenty years working with small and medium enterprises and the organisations that support them.

However, the bare bones description of my background hides a variety of experiences that have shaped my views on entrepreneurship. So when you read this book you should not expect a thesis anchored in academia, but one that draws lessons from those many years of experiences.

Certainly my time as a teacher has given me an insight into the education system that has enabled me to understand why the present system fails to deliver the entrepreneurial mindset that I shall demonstrate that we need in order to cope with a fast changing global world.

That is not to say that there are no opportunities for entrepreneurial thinking within education as there are plenty of individual instances of such activity. Indeed, I was instrumental in bringing computer studies into my school before people recognised the potential of such machines. However, such initiatives take place within an education system that was not designed for an entrepreneurial world and which has been further damaged by an increasingly restrictive social environment.

Some would argue that working for a multi-national would be totally against the concept of entrepreneurship. Many see large companies as the equivalent of giant oil tankers that plough forward remorselessly. There is a real belief that it is impossible to turn the tanker at entrepreneurial speed!

However, it was easy to see that there was plenty of entrepreneurism happening within the computer giant for whom I worked. This was a company that had traditionally taken five years to bring a product to market. However, once Apple threatened them they were able to develop a PC within nine months.

As with most large companies there was an almost monolithic structure with complex written procedures and processes, but the real changes within the organisation were achieved by those that did not accept the status quo as inevitable, but reacted with an entrepreneurial approach. Indeed, when I look back now on my twenty years within the company I always remember the exciting changes in which I was involved.

But probably my biggest exposure to entrepreneurship has been through my work as a consultant advising and mentoring entrepreneurs, and as an international consultant helping other countries to establish organisations to assist entrepreneurs.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

That is not to say that every business I worked with was an entrepreneur. If you study a range of start-up businesses you are as likely to find a lack of entrepreneurial spirit, as you are if you study a large company. In other words, small is not always beautiful and large is not always bad.

Already you should be able to see that this is a large and complex subject. This is not about the successful characteristics of Steve Jobs or the desire to clone Bill Gates or Richard Branson. Producing more of each of these people would not solve today's economic problems.

Today the world changes faster than it ever has in the history of mankind. In the three years since I last bought a car the engineers have taught cars how to park themselves, turn on the lights and operate the windscreen wipers. In the States there is now a car that is licensed to drive itself.

If I were writing this book twenty-five years ago there would have been no Internet available, my mobile telephone would have been the size of a house brick and we still had six years to wait for the launch of the DVD!

As the world rapidly changes developed countries complain about the various skill shortages. Immigration policies are often dictated by the skill shortfall within many countries such as the need for IT skills or doctors and nurses. And yet, through my many experiences I have witnessed that the increasing pressure to be seen as successful together with the desire to eliminate all risk from society has created the largest skill gap of all.

That skill gap is the pool of entrepreneurs necessary to react quickly enough to the manifold opportunities created from the almost daily changes around us. What was once thought of as impossible is now accepted as the norm. It was not that many years ago that Ken Olson of DEC could not see a need for anyone to have a computer in his or her home!

So this book seeks to find practical ways to create the people that we need to fill the entrepreneurial skill gap. No one believes that one book will change a system that has been in place since the industrial revolution, but we can at least make a start.

As I put on social media recently 'will those of you who are saying that it is impossible please stop interrupting those of us that are doing it'! So in deference to Peter Kilby, it is time we started to hunt the Heffalump.

What I mean by that is that we need to try and find some understanding of what constitutes an entrepreneur if we are going to be able to develop the skill set necessary for successful entrepreneurship.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Peter Kilby's notion of the Heffalump was based on the animal of that name which occurs in the Winnie the Pooh stories. The Heffalump is an animal that never actually appears and no one actually sees one.

When I was running a business support agency I once remarked that our biggest difficulty was identifying a potential start up business. If we wanted a plumber or a lawyer we went to directories. However, it was impossible to walk down the street and say that you could spot someone who was thinking of starting a business! Whilst I do not define entrepreneurs as simply people that want to start a business, it is equally true that entrepreneurs do not walk differently, dress differently or speak differently.

One of the problems of identifying entrepreneurs is that too often it is the social and educational system that militates against entrepreneurial thinking that tries to identify and measure the entrepreneur. The problem is exacerbated by the increasing abuse of the word by organisations in order to create personal benefit.

A perfect example of this abuse lies in many of the agencies that exist to support business start up. There has been a steady drift through the term 'business' to 'enterprise' and on to 'entrepreneurship'. Essentially the offerings have remained the same and only the names have changed.

The impression is created that entrepreneurship only applies to a certain sector of the community. It is similar to the way that the word 'innovation' has been high jacked by the technology industry. This cavalier use of words has blurred rather than increased the understanding of entrepreneurship.

Neither of these assertions is true of course. Entrepreneurship and innovation are both necessary and applicable in all walks of life. Neither are they the prerogative only of the developed world. It is simply the arrogance of the people of the developed world to believe they are the founts of all knowledge.

There is also a belief that entrepreneurship and innovation are the prerogative of the business community and the intelligent. This is also not true. It wasn't the boss of the company that came up with typing correcting fluid. It was his secretary who got fed up with spending time re-typing because of errors.

Indeed, it has been my experience that the higher up an organisation a person sits the less likely they are to have innovative ideas. Hopefully we can uncover some of the reasons for this later on.

One of the sad things I discovered when researching this book was that if you search on entrepreneurship and everyday life you get lots of references to housewives starting businesses thereby reinforcing the concept that entrepreneurship is a small business thing. People do not seem to recognise that many inventions are only successful because ordinary people use them in an entrepreneurial way.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Therefore, what I want to do in this book is to get back to what real entrepreneurship is so that we can look at creating entrepreneurs for the rapidly changing global world rather than for one small sector of society.

It is my contention that, although business examples are the easiest to understand, the differentiation of an entrepreneur is in the way in which they think and react. This aspect of an entrepreneur I refer to as the mindset. A mindset is not any one characteristic, but a whole group of thoughts and reactions that come together to create the whole.

Probably the best place to start would be with the original word entrepreneur. It is generally agreed that the word comes from an 13th century French verb, 'entreprendre' meaning to undertake or to do something. Interestingly, some, to satisfy their own particular interest, have modified even that simple fact. Some people interpret 'entre' as between and 'prendre' as to work and hence interpret it as between work or unemployed!

Economists gradually refined the definition by adding various attributes to the definition. The first step was to relate it to business during the 16th century. By the 18th century risk had been added in that the business venture had no guarantee of profit.

In the 19th century further skills were added including knowledge skills, what today we would call business skills, and also the skill of management. It was not until the last century that calculated risk appeared and by mid-century the concept of innovation had been added.

However, all of these definitions and additions come from economists and hence focus entirely on the traditional western business model. This model assumes that success be measured in terms of return on investment (ROI) or profit or some other financial measurement.

Were this to be the real case then one could argue that only countries and people that adopt the western, profit based business model can have and be entrepreneurs. However, as someone that has witnessed other models in other parts of the world, it is clear that it is possible to have entrepreneurs that do not maximize profit or return on investment. The creation of social entrepreneurship further disproves the financial basis for measuring entrepreneurship.

Interestingly, while I was researching the origins of the word, I came across the fact that 'anthaprerna' is a word in Sanskrit that means 'self-motivation'. I am not suggesting that the accepted definition is wrong, but I do think that it has an interesting correlation with my concept of the entrepreneurial mindset.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

It is also true that the economists do touch on some other attributes that are found in entrepreneurs. One of those is the willingness to take calculated risks. That is not to say that they are reckless, but rather that the innovative nature of their ideas will mean that they will have to make decisions with no guarantee of success.

But if we go back to my earlier contention together with my experience of other business models, I have to discard the pure economic definitions in favour of something that fits all business models, fits people inside large businesses, fits social entrepreneurs and fits entrepreneurial activity in everyday life. I want to rest the concept away from the business people of the western world and let it be made applicable to anyone.

Interestingly, the best non-business definition that I found was one that was devised 37 years ago by professor Howard Stevenson of the Harvard Business School. He defined entrepreneurship as:

"The pursuit of opportunity without regard to the resources currently controlled"

While it doesn't encompass all that is needed to be successful in any of the fields I have mentioned, it does have a resonance with the experiences I have had in my varied working life.

This definition does not mean that people take unnecessary risks. However, it does mean that entrepreneurs don't fall at the first hurdle when they reach an obstacle. Rather they will look at ways to resolve or circumvent the problem. Where most people see a problem then the entrepreneur will see an opportunity.

So along with the willingness to take risks we can now add both perseverance and optimism to the mindset. However, for an entrepreneur to be optimistic they need to have a belief in what they wish to achieve and that in turn requires a vision.

That vision is one that may well need to be articulated because often entrepreneurs cannot work alone and need support of various kinds. This may involve human resource or it may involve physical resource. An entrepreneur needs people working with him or her on something with no guarantee of success so they have to believe the vision.

Often the most important people to believe the vision are family and friends who the entrepreneur relies upon for support. When it comes to resources, whether financial or physical, these people must certainly believe the vision.

For people to believe the vision, they must believe in its achievability and the reason for achieving it. Far too often I have been faced with people with a so-called entrepreneurial idea that falls at the first fence when one asks the question 'who wants it' or 'what problem does it solve'.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

The time when this is most likely to happen is when it is a business idea. One person told me the business would make them a multi-millionaire on the day their business launched. This was despite a raft of flaws in the vision. Today several years on the company is still making a loss and is unlikely to ever overcome the flaws in the vision.

And yet, at the same time I have seen such unlikely visions as a mobile sauna and a mobile dog-washing vehicle that have both been very successful. Interestingly, the successful ones not only have a clear vision based on need and a problem that needed solving, they also had another attribute that the first business did not have.

That attribute was one of self-awareness. By self-awareness I mean that the person has a clear understanding of their skills and of their limitations. As a result they are willing to work with others, to listen to others and to modify their vision in the light of such discussions.

This self-awareness, coupled with the need to work with people that understand and are committed to the vision leads to a far less hierarchical structure. Most entrepreneurial activity will start with a fairly flat organisational structure.

This means that entrepreneurs are often more interested in achieving their vision than they are about status. True entrepreneurs are more interested in gaining success because of the success of their idea, product or process than they are about their title on the business card.

MSM
MAASTRICHT SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
Increase your impact with MSM Executive Education
For almost 60 years Maastricht School of Management has been enhancing the management capacity of professionals and organizations around the world through state-of-the-art management education.
Our broad range of Open Enrollment Executive Programs offers you a unique interactive, stimulating and multicultural learning experience.
Be prepared for tomorrow's management challenges and apply today.
For more information, visit www.msm.nl or contact us at +31 43 38 70 808 or via admissions@msm.nl
the globally networked management school

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Again, I have seen ventures where the first thing that the so-called entrepreneur does is to get business cards printed with the words managing director on them. The true entrepreneur wants the result to speak for them, not a self-appointed title.

Out of the self-awareness and the willingness to work with and listen to others comes another important attribute of confidence. People often ask me if I think their idea will work. I always reply by asking them the same question. I point out that it is not important that I believe it will work; it matters whether they believe it will work.

When I refer to confidence, I do not mean someone that is brash or over-confident. I mean that the person has enough self-belief and belief in those around him or her to resist the knocks that will usually come and still pursue their vision.

They also need to have the confidence to lead and they must be able to converse with confidence when dealing with others outside of the immediate organisation. Incidentally, when I refer to organisation this could mean a business, a department or simply a group of friends or relations.

Which leads me to what I believe is one of the most important attributes of the entrepreneur and the one that is being steadily eroded in western society. That characteristic is not being afraid to fail. It is clearly an important attribute because of the fact that the newness of entrepreneurial activity will often lead to failure and the entrepreneur has to be able to rise up and try again.

I point out to students that without the ability to keep trying we would not have got the light bulb and we would still be using candles. Although there is some dispute about the actual number of failures, Thomas Edison was reported as saying that he did not fail but that he simply found 10,000 ways that did not work!

Another example of not stopping at the first failure surrounds the well-known car anti-damp product, WD40. This product was originally developed to displace water on rockets. The water displacement properties gave rise to the WD part of the name and the 40 came because it was the 40th formulation to work. Because of its water displacement properties staff started taking some and using it on their cars and suddenly a new commercially viable product was born.

In the next chapter I will look at why this characteristic of lack of fear of failure is being suppressed and educated out of the western world, but it is certainly one of the key characteristics of the entrepreneurial mindset that can and must be developed.

All of the characteristics that have been covered so far are necessary for someone to be able to act in an entrepreneurial way, but there is one other characteristic for success that seems to be fast being eroded in the western world and that is the one of hard work.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

There seems to be a misapprehension in people's minds that the true entrepreneur just happens. Whilst it satisfies the media to sell stories of amazing and instant success, the reality is that, along with the opportunities that appeared before them and the mindset to grasp those opportunities, there is a need to get about 10,000 hours of work in to achieve excellence.

It is interesting to read Malcolm Gladwell in his book Outliers with regard to the way people as diverse as Bill Gates and the Beatles managed their 'instant success' as a result of their 10,000 hours!

So we are now getting close to defining our mindset that we need to develop. Entrepreneurs need to have:

- A clear and achievable vision
- A vision where all the resources may not be in their control
- Self-awareness
- Confidence
- Self motivation
- A willingness to take calculated risks
- A willingness to listen to others
- A lack of fear of failure
- A willingness to work hard

The interesting thing about this particular mindset is that none of this refers to academic prowess. There is no need for the proverbial MBA. There is nothing here that cannot be applied to individuals and departments within larger organisations and there is nothing to stop people applying the same qualities within their social sphere as well as in their work sphere.

It has always been a disappointment to me that the word entrepreneur is not associated with local and national governments. Unfortunately they have always seemed to me to be the antithesis of entrepreneurship. Given the opportunities afforded society as the global society gets faster and faster, just think what a difference could be made in the world if nations and municipalities were full of entrepreneurs.

As I see a world that embraces technology in so many walks of life I still marvel that the bastion of western democracy, the English elections, is characterized by a stub of black pencil writing on a slip of paper in a temporary wooden cubicle reminiscent of a portaloo, located in a cold church hall.

While this may seem amusing and archaic, these are the people in control of a system that is fast eliminating the skills we need to face the future. In the next chapter we will look at why this is and then go on to look for remedies.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

2 What stops people behaving in an entrepreneurial way?

Although it is easy to look at today's risk-averse western societies where everything seems to be controlled by health and safety legislation and claims lawyers, in reality the problem started long before this. It is possible to argue that the cultural history of western society has been militating against entrepreneurship for most people for hundreds of years.

One of the biggest inhibitors to self-awareness, free thinking and risk taking is a hierarchical organizational structure where those at the top hold all of the power and where those lower down are dependent on those above. In the Middle Ages power was determined by land ownership and this in turn was determined by rewards to knights for success in battle. Hence the army effectively sat at the top of the hierarchical tree.

Those below the knight were allowed a share of the land in order to live and survive in return for a financial contribution to the landowner and a willingness to fight in future battles on the side of the landowner.

Two interesting things come out of this arrangement. The first thing to note is that this system was sustained by people knowing and accepting their place within the hierarchy. Secondly, as the payment to the landowner was based on a percentage, working harder meant paying more to the landowner.

It is not difficult to see that as your boss was also head of your military division then it was likely that the discipline of the military would also carry over into the running of the land. In other words, the system was maintained for the benefit of the top of the hierarchy through people knowing their place and not questioning and taking risks.

So, long before the industrial revolution, the hierarchical class system had been set into the culture of the western world. Therefore, it was not surprising that when the industrial revolution came along that a similar structure was developed for running large businesses.

The system for controlling businesses had been set as one that was extremely efficient, like the new machines, but was based on unquestioning adherence to the philosophy of everyone knowing their place.

This approach clearly maintained the authority of, if not the respect for, the boss. However, it had the downside of requiring any entrepreneurial thought to come from above. It also meant that hard work from those below rewarded those above, making entrepreneurial thought from the workers even less likely.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

But not only were the army and landowners long time advocates of the pyramid structure of control; western religion had also operated a hierarchical structure that lead up to the ultimate power at the top who was never to be questioned. So whether at work, fighting in the army or in church you were expected to know your place and to obey commands.

This meant that stepping out of the norm was an extremely risky business that was not to be taken lightly. Imagine being a worker in days gone by. Even on Sunday when you were not working you would be expected to attend church. Here there would be a hierarchical seating plan with a special place for the lord of the manor and his family and where he and the local priest would be reckoned to be the most important people in the area.

One thing that the industrial revolution did bring was a need to improve the education of the masses, but because of the cultural conditioning of the past this opportunity was missed and further re-enforced rather than changed things.

Of course, the hierarchical pyramid approach to work, religion and military had concentrated power into a small number at the top of the pile and hence any attempt to upgrade those below them could be seen as a threat to that power. That is not to say that all bosses, landowners or religious leaders were motivated by power. There would have been some good leaders in each of the fields but they would have been the exception.

See the light!
The sooner you realize we are right, the sooner your life will get better!

A bit over the top? Yes we know!

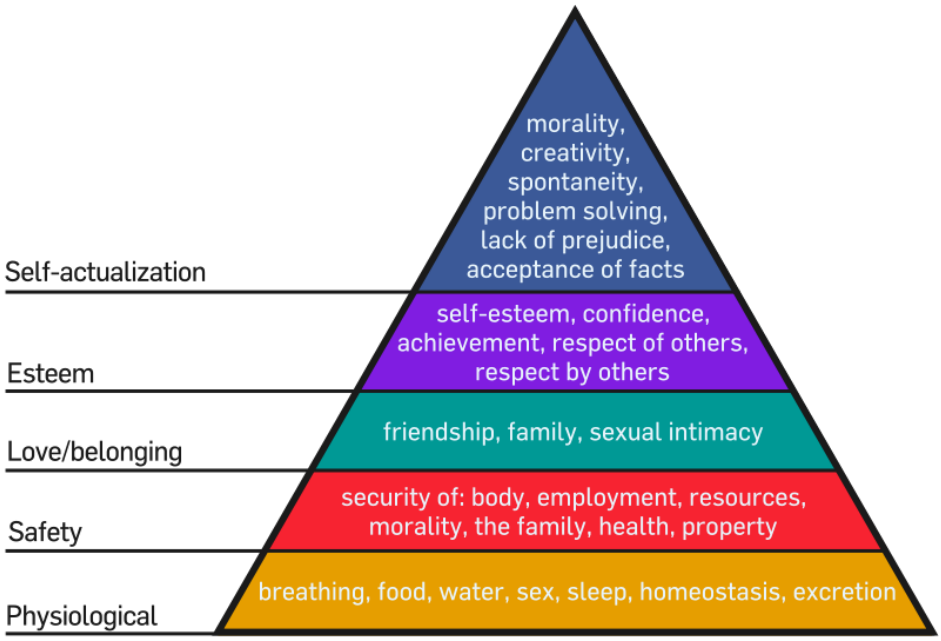
We are just that sure that we can make your media activities more effective.

Get "Bookboon's Free Media Advice"
Email kbm@bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs people need to have reached the state of self-esteem before they feel confident enough to move to self-actualisation that is necessary for entrepreneurial change. However, if the overriding need is for power then the person is back at level two of Maslow which is the safety level where the desire is to protect ones self rather than to lead.


morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts
Self-actualization
self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others
Esteem
friendship, family, sexual intimacy
Love/belonging
security of: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property
Safety
breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion
Physiological

From the comments and approaches taken to educating the masses from the time of the industrial revolution it was clear that many people saw education of the masses as a threat to their power and hence their safety. This led to changes being made that did not damage the status quo but which supplied skills for the business owners of the time.

An example of the desire not to 'rock the boat' came in the following quote in the book Education in England by Derek Gillard.

> One Justice of the Peace, for example, opined in 1807 that:
>
> It is doubtless desirable that the poor should be generally instructed in reading, if it were only for the best of purposes – that they may read the Scriptures. As to writing and arithmetic, it may be apprehended that such a degree of knowledge would produce in them disrelish for the laborious occupations of life.

The book further goes on to quote a Member of Parliament, Davies Giddy, speaking in 1807 as saying in Parliament that:

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

> However specious in theory the project might be of giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would, in effect, be found to be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching them the virtue of subordination, it would render them factious and refractory.

If you then add to the equation the fact that education for the masses would be expensive, then it is not surprising that the first moves in improving education included:

- Sunday Schools where people were taught to read the bible on their day off
- Schools of Industry where they were taught spinning, sewing, shoemaking and wool carding and laundry work
- 'Academic schools' where they were taught elementary reading, writing and arithmetic (3Rs) by rote so that one teacher could teach hundreds of students at a time, mass producing education rather like an industrial factory.

As far as serious education leading to university and the professions was concerned, these were paid establishments and hence were the prerogative of the rich and powerful. Unfortunately these establishments kept a strong focus on subjects of the classics. Indeed, in 1805 the Court of Chancery ruled that it was illegal for the governors of Leeds Grammar School to spend endowment funds on teaching modern and commercial subjects!

As education did steadily reform many of the teachers came through the university system. Hence the education system that we now see is based on the university as the pinnacle of achievement with the schools below the university all contributing to getting people to the next stage of the pyramid. This re-enforces and protects those at the top of the education pyramid and assumes that academic success is the way to success.

Further damage to an entrepreneurial approach came when education developed the school year. There were actually people that believed that too much learning was not good for the brain. In Malcolm Gladwell's book, Outliers, he references the report of a US Commissioner of education who published a report by Edward Jarvis on 'The Relation of Education to Insanity'. In this report he Jarvis concluded that of 1,741 cases of insanity that he had studied 205 of them were caused by 'over-study'.

This commonly held view in the western world resulted in the removal of Saturday schooling, the shortening of the school day and the extending of school holidays. Whilst this may seem laughable today, the model that developed the present western school year was based on the agricultural model pre-industrial revolution.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

In those days there was an intense amount of activity around Easter when the whole family would sow the crops and then another in the summer at harvest time. Add to this the concept of conserving resources by hibernating in the winter and the belief in western agriculture of leaving fields fallow to rejuvenate and you have the basis for the 21 century school year!

What this system doesn't recognise is that the global world is changing much faster than ever before. Things exist today that were not even dreamed of when today's university students entered into the education system and hence an academic education without the skills of the entrepreneurial mindset in order to react to such changes can become irrelevant.

So far we have looked back to see the cultural influences that have suppressed the desire to act in an entrepreneurial way. But there are many other influences from the present day that re-enforce those cultural differences.

As we have seen, the key players in the power games of the past were the church leaders, the landowners and the business barons. However, with the increase in the quantity of education, regardless of the relevance, and the increased mobility of the population and you have to find a new way to exercise power.

This new form of control has come about through the use of legislation. Unfortunately, legislation that started out with the intention of improving conditions for the people that government served has turned into legislation that restricts many of the activities at the top of Maslow's Hierarchy.

I WANT TO CHANGE DIRECTION,
AND THE WORLD.
GOT-THE-ENERGY-TO-LEAD.COM
We believe that energy suppliers should be renewable, too. We are therefore looking for enthusiastic new colleagues with plenty of ideas who want to join RWE in changing the world. Visit us online to find out what we are offering and how we are working together to ensure the energy of the future.
RWE
The energy to lead

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Once government decides that it's only power is to legislate then survival depends on a continuous production line of legislation. What may start out as a good intention can soon develop into a straight jacket for the individual it is trying to protect. Nowhere is this truer than in the area of health and safety legislation.

To make matters worse, the whole area of health and safety has spawned a generation of 'ambulance chasing lawyers' who identified a quick way to make money and status through litigation against those that may inadvertently stray the wrong side of the copious amounts of legislation.

In this new world, at a time when we desperately need people with the entrepreneurial mindset to cope with the ever changing challenges, we are creating a society that is afraid to put their heads above the parapet for fear of ending up in litigation. Suddenly failure is an expensive crime, there is no longer such a thing as an accident and the best way to survive is to play it safe.

This 'play it safe' mentality has also carried over into the way that people run large businesses these days. Within these companies the overriding factor in decision-making is influenced by short-term gains. So, although companies will profess to spend billions in some cases on research and development, many will not have had a major breakthrough for several years.

These very companies will proudly boast employee suggestion schemes and the like but will immediately put the assessment hierarchy over the top of the process. As ideas move up the chain the assessors will weed out the entrepreneurial suggestions in favour of the minor improvements with minimal risk. Most great ideas will never get anywhere near the top of the assessment pyramid.

What makes this risk-free approach all the more depressing is that it generates adults with a mindset that they inadvertently pass on to their children. If a child has an accident then someone has to be to blame; children's games have the risk eliminated from them; children are over-protected in every aspect of their lives.

We also live in a Western world that has become the victim of some of the entrepreneurism for which we now clamour. In a world of instant meals and fast food, of music and films on instant download, of instant credit and of 'reality' TV where anyone can be a star, is it any wonder that hard work is considered a bad option.

And yet if you look at the background of Leona Lewis, probably the most famous of the X-Factor winners, you will discover a background of four theatrical schools, instrumental training in guitar and piano and opera singing training. She had also spent time in recording studios. In other words, this was not an everyday girl that just turned up to an audition after her friends had told her she was good at Karaoke!

However, given the option between hard work and the media hype of instant success for all then it is not hard to see how people can be conned into thinking that commitment and dedication are old-fashioned values.

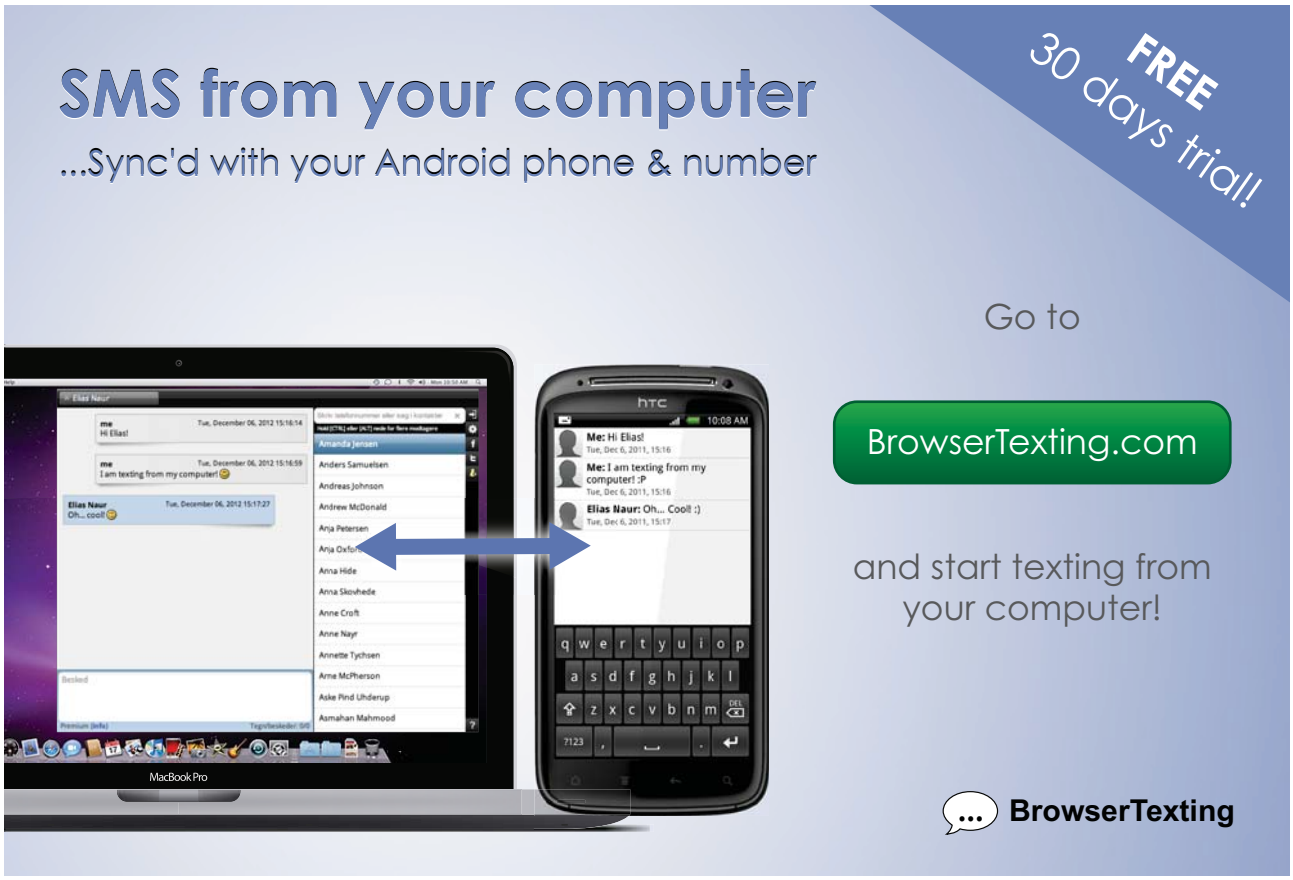
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

There are those that would argue that these attitudes is so ingrained in our psyche that we cannot go back to the days when children were allowed to climb trees, where people were responsible for their own safety and where people took the sorts of risks that created new industries, discovered new lands and even put a man on the moon.

However, there are countries that are not in recession. There are countries where the economy is growing. There are countries where entrepreneurism and a more cooperative business model works very well. There are countries where the people are not afraid of their own shadow and are prepared to try and possibly fail. There are countries where the people don't need someone else to motivate them and there are countries where people know that if they work harder they will directly benefit.

I am not naïve enough to believe that the western leaders that top the pyramid that they built underneath themselves are likely to give up their position of power, nor do I expect the universities and business schools of the world to throw away their theories. Mind you, someone might want to re-define the word developed when applied to countries. Given the role of the service sector in the present economic crisis, one definition of a developed country is based on the size of its service sector!

But at the same time I do not believe that the position is hopeless. Past cultural problems can be overcome as witnessed in the way Korean Airlines overcame the cultural communications problems that led to so many accidents and have developed a great safety record. The rest of the book will concentrate on how we can achieve this.



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

3 How entrepreneurial are you?

So often in my work I meet people who believe that they are entrepreneurial and do not realise how restricted they have become because of the constraints that we have discussed previously in this book. They believe that because they have decided to start their own business this makes them an entrepreneur. If that were the case, why didn't they behave entrepreneurially in their own life or when working for others?

I have worked with countless embryo businesses, and, all to often, people have decided to start up a new venture because of redundancy or lack of employment opportunities in their field of expertise. This rarely demonstrates a true entrepreneurial desire but rather a 'last ditch' alternative to unemployment.

One way to consider whether you are entrepreneurial in your approach to life is to look at your behaviour at home or in employment. For example, try writing down all of the new ideas or processes that you have suggested and/or implemented in the workplace. Did this give you a buzz or did you resist the concept of change?

At home do you always do the same things every week or are you keen to try new things? Is Thursday night always darts night regardless of the opportunities available? Do you always go on holiday to the same place each year or do you like to find new and perhaps less obvious places? Do you always let the holiday representative book your tours or are you happier to go off and do your own thing?

When I give lectures or work with entrepreneurs I often give some puzzles to illustrate my points regarding entrepreneurship. I do not refer to these examples as tests but rather as a stimulus to get people to want to look harder at how to become truly entrepreneurial. What follows are three examples of the sort of things that I use. I would suggest trying to tackle these before moving on to the answers that follow.

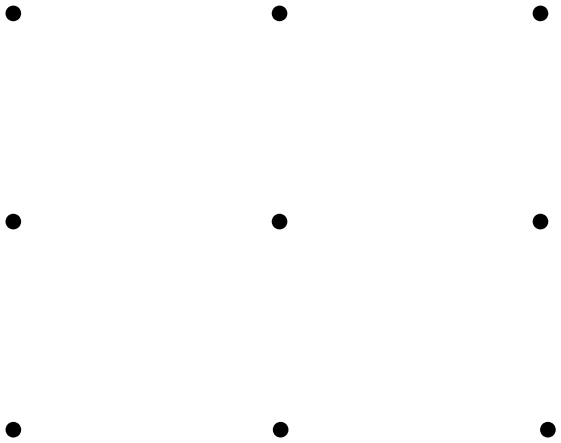
The third eye

Imagine that you have been given the privilege of having a third eye added to your body. You can have this eye added to anywhere on your body that you choose. Explain where you would put the eye and why.

Joining the dots

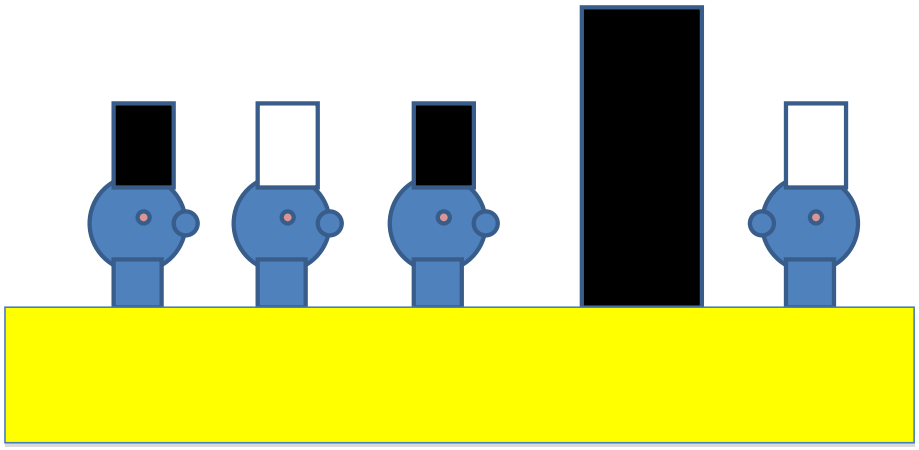
Below is a grid of nine dots. The task is to join all of the dots with as few straight lines as possible. You must pass through each dot on the grid with a straight line and you must pass through each dot only once. The straight lines must join to each other. How many straight lines did you draw?

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com



Black and white hats

Here is a diagram of four men wearing hats. Two have black hats and two have white hats. They are buried up to their necks in sand and cannot turn around. The black rectangle is a solid wall. The men can only speak once they have deduced correctly the colour of their hat. Which man speaks first?



Now that you have had time to look at the three problems, let us look at what it tells us. What is important is not necessarily the answer but rather what reaching the answer tells us about ourselves.

In the case of the extra eye this is an apparently free choice and hence no one answer is more right than another. However, in using this test on hundreds of people the majority of adults will put the eye on their back or on the back of their head. Their verbal reasoning is that this would enable them to see behind them. However, this is also the safe option, as it does not open them to the possibility of a solution that is different from everyone else.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

However, if you ask a group of children that have yet to be indoctrinated with the conformity and do not feel the need to be the same as everyone else then you get much more imaginative answers such as on the end of fingers so as to allow people to look round corners.

The problem for adults in this scenario is that they have been conditioned to believe that there is only one right answer and even in a free choice question they will go for the least risk solution. Subconsciously they may consider the less obvious answer but will take the more obvious answer because as people get older they are less likely to want to stand out from the crowd because of the conditioning we have already discussed.

Now let us look at the question of the dots. I like this puzzle because it is a good example of the way we put artificial boundaries on our thinking. Most people can solve this with five lines and this satisfies all of the criteria set. This means that technically it is a correct solution and many people will achieve this. However, to solve this with only four straight lines requires the solver to really think 'outside of the box'.

**Who is your target group?
And how can we reach them?**

At Bookboon, you can segment the exact right audience for your advertising campaign.

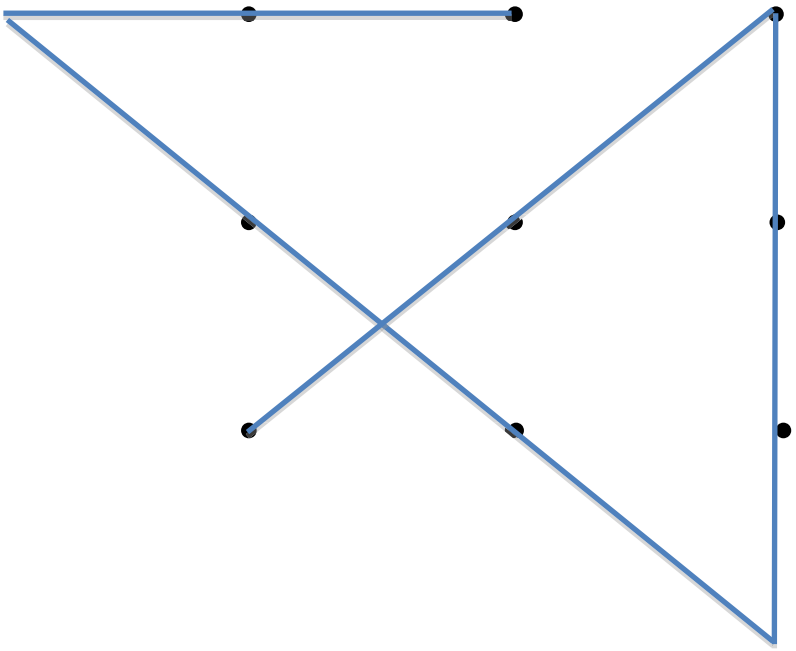
Our eBooks offer in-book advertising spot to reach the right candidate.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

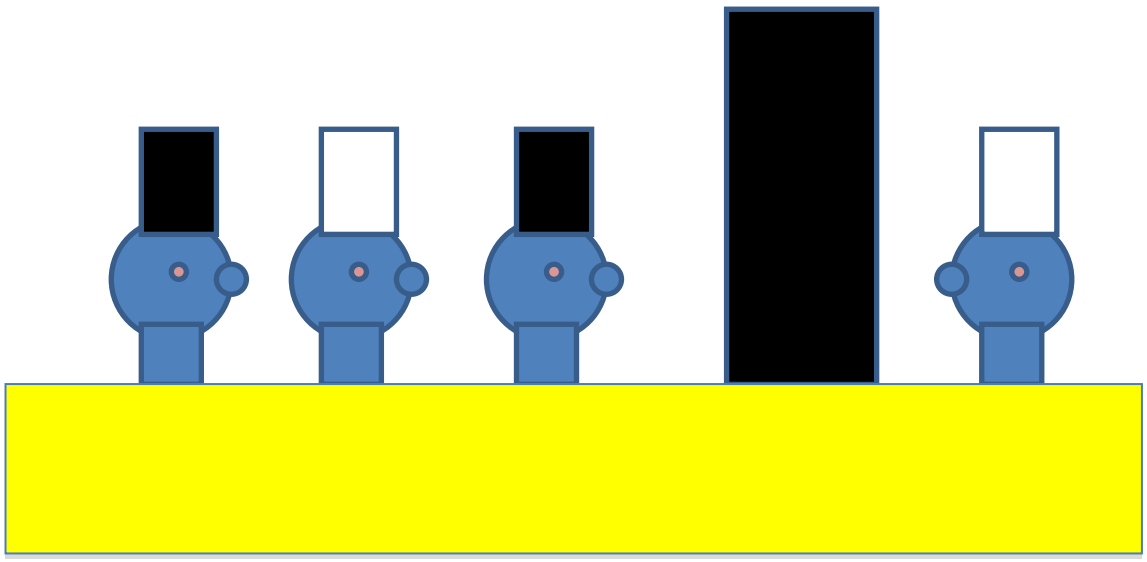
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more



When the solution is put to adults there is often the response that "you didn't tell us that we could go outside the box". However, it is also true that no one told people that they could not. They simply put artificial lines between the dots and created their own box. How many times in life do we impose limitations on ourselves that are not really there but which our conditioning leads us to believe that they are.

Finally let us look at the hats puzzle



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Clearly the man on the right cannot speak, as he cannot see any of the other hats. For the same reason the man third from the left cannot speak either. This leaves the black and white hats to the left of the wall. Obviously the man in the black hat cannot speak because he can see a black and a white hat and so he has no way of telling which of the two colours he has.

This leaves us with the man in the white hat. He can only see the black hat and so he is instantly discarded. However, he can work out that if he had a black hat on then the man behind him would have seen two black hats and would have spoken to say that he had a white one. The fact that he has not spoken means that the man second from the left must be wearing white and hence he is the one that speaks.

Again, because we are talking about colour we focus on sight as the primary method of determining the answer. However, on the basis of sight alone then this is unsolvable. What this puzzle needs is the willingness to look at other senses such as sound or the lack of it in order to solve the puzzle.

It is very easy to dismiss these three puzzles as simply interesting diversions and to try to convince yourself that you are really your own person that doesn't follow the crowd but is independent and freethinking. But if this is the case then why is there a sneaking admiration for these solutions and a wish that you could have solved them?

Moreover, I wonder why people love to take these challenges, once they know the solutions, and set them for their friends and colleagues. They take great delight in seeing that others cannot do it and then demonstrate their own skill by showing them the answers. Could it be that deep down we all do want to be thought of as independent freethinkers and that by setting these puzzles to others we attempt to show that we are further down that path than they are?

For whatever reason, the next section of the book covers a number of exercises that will encourage you to develop the skills of the entrepreneur so that instead of appearing to be a freethinker by regurgitating mine or other peoples solutions to problems you can really solve them yourself.

But this is much more than an exercise in puzzle solving. This is about changing your mindset to one that thinks more entrepreneurially, not just in a bar with your friends but in your work life and family life.

This may mean that more people develop really entrepreneurial businesses, but it would also encourage people to challenge the status quo at home and at work. With a rapidly changing world it is essential that people challenge what they are doing in the workplace and question whether there is a better way. But they should also challenge themselves at home to question whether they can enhance their lives by not always going with the crowd.

This book is for those that want to be in the first group.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

4 Developing a clear vision

In the first chapter we discussed the sort of characteristics that make up an entrepreneurial mindset. These characteristics were:

- A clear and achievable vision
- A vision where all the resources may not be in their control
- Self-awareness
- Confidence
- Self motivation
- A willingness to take calculated risks
- A willingness to listen to others
- A lack of fear of failure
- A willingness to work hard

If we were honest, few of us actually have a clear and achievable vision that we have created ourselves. Indeed, mostly they are not vision at all but could more readily be defined as expectations of others. These expectations are shaped much more by parents, teachers and peer groups than by our own thinking.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

We have even invented a term for young people that don't follow the accepted norms and attempt to forge their own vision. We talk about 'rebellious teenagers' and the fact that it is a 'phase that they will grow out of'!

At school they make judgments about future careers based not on desire or vision but on academic success. If you are good at sciences and happen to ride a horse then rest assured that the careers teacher will have you down as a veterinarian!

Peer group pressure also plays a part in establishing 'your' vision. People want you to conform to the norms of the group. For example, decision of whether to buy or rent accommodation is determined as much by your social group as by your personal desire.

The rest of this chapter is a process I developed for people who had been made redundant and is designed to help you, possibly for the first time, to build YOUR personal vision. These exercises work towards your personal definition of what you want to do with your life. Once there is a vision we can move on to the other entrepreneurial skills necessary to implement your vision.

The aim of this exercise is to help you to focus on the sort of person that you are, the values that are important and rewarding in your work and leisure times and the transferable skills that you have gained and would like to use in the future.

Constructing a lifeline

When considering who you are now, it is interesting to look at the history that has shaped you. During this part of the exercise focus on the key events and people that come to mind, peaks and troughs, stresses, decisions made by you or for you. Bear in mind that your lifeline has to contain events that are important to you. For that reason it is impossible to tell you what sort of things to put on your lifeline. What may seem trivial to one person may be of great significance to you.

1. Take a piece of blank paper and draw a line across it to represent your life so far. The shape of the line has no significance so draw the line the way you want it.
2. One end of the line is when you were born and the other end is now.
3. Mark key events along the line from as early as possible until now. Leave plenty of space between the years to fit memories as they flow.
4. Look back at each event and put any symbols that are appropriate next to each one from the selection below:

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

P	Peak or High point
V	Trough or low point
S	Stressful
R	Risky
Y	Your choice
X	Not your choice

What you will find is that activities throughout your life may well have more than one code against them. For example, an activity may be a high point and may have been risky and your choice. This would generate a set of codes of P, R, and Y.

The more events you can put on the lifeline the better the analysis.

What you will find with the lifeline is that consistent patterns will start to emerge. High points in your life will usually have similar patterns and low points will tend to have different but consistent patterns. You need to look at these and identify the patterns that lead to highs. It would be a good idea in constructing a future vision to construct one that is based on the characteristics that produce highs rather than lows.

Note any thoughts, ideas or words that come to mind as you look at the final result. The following questions may help to stimulate this process:

a) Are there any surprises?
b) What sort of experiences are the peaks?
c) What sort of experiences are the troughs?
d) What are the main causes of stress?
e) Do you take many risks?
f) Is there a positive or negative outcome to the risk taking?
g) Do you see any themes?
h) Do you see any changes in pattern?

Make a note of what you learn about yourself and how you have been living your life until now. These notes can be useful for reflection later when considering your next course of action.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Understanding your work and leisure values

The aim of this part of the process is to help you to answer questions about what you want from your life such as:

- How do I like to spend my time
- Where do I want to live and work
- How important is money, status, security, etc.

Having identified the values that matter to you it becomes easier to make life more rewarding by making sure that you build them as far as possible into your future work and leisure vision.

Your work values

Print off the following list of 35 values and the header cards.

With us you can shape the future. Every single day.

For more information go to:
www.eon-career.com

Your energy shapes the future.

e·on

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

A WELL-KNOWN ORGANISATION **You like being part of a well-known organisation**	**PROMOTION** **You like to work where there is a good chance of promotion**
CHALLENGE **You enjoy being 'stretched' and given new problems to work on**	**ROUTINE** **You like a work routine which is fairly predicable**
PRESSURE **You like working to deadlines**	**COMMUNITY** **You like to live in a place where you can get involved in the community**
WORK WITH OTHERS **You like to work in a team alongside others**	**PHYSICAL CHALLENGE** **You enjoy doing something that is physically demanding**
WORK ALONE **You like to work on your own**	**ARTISTIC** **You enjoy work involving drawing, designing, making music, making models, etc.**

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

COMMUNICATION **You enjoy being able to express ideas well in writing or in speech**	**RECOGNITION** **You do like people to appreciate you for work you do**
SECURITY **It is important to know your work will always be there for you**	**CONTACT WITH PEOPLE** **You enjoy having a lot of contact with people**
PRECISE WORK **You like working at things which involve great care and concentration**	**HELP SOCIETY** **You like to think that your work is producing something worthwhile for society**
SUPERVISION **You enjoy being responsible for work done by others**	**PERSUADING PEOPLE** **You enjoy persuading people to buy something or change their minds about something**
LEARNING **It is important for you to learn new things**	**BEING EXPERT** **You like being known as someone with special knowledge or skills**

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

TIME FREEDOM **You prefer to be able to choose your own times for doing things, not having rigid working hours**	**FRIENDSHIP** **You would or do like close friendships with people at work**
FAST PACE **You enjoy working rapidly at a high pace**	**STATUS** **You enjoy being in a position which leads other people to respect you**
MAKING DECISIONS **It is important to you to have to make decisions about how things should be done, who should do it and when it should be done**	**CREATIVITY** **Thinking up new ideas and ways of doing things is important to you**
RISK **You like to take risks**	**EXCITEMENT** **It is important for you to have a lot of excitement in your work**
MONEY **Earning a large amount of money is important to you**	**HELPING OTHERS** **It is important to you to help other people either individually or in groups, a part of your work**

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

PLACE OF WORK **It is important that you work in the right part of the country for you**	**PEACE** **You prefer to have few pressures or uncomfortable demands**
VARIETY **You enjoy having lots of different things to do**	**COMPETITION** **You enjoy competing against other people or groups**
INDEPENDENCE **You like being able to work in the way you want, without others telling you what to do**	

Do your employees receive the right training?

Bookboon offers an eLibrairy with a wide range of Soft Skill training & Microsoft Office books to keep your staff up to date at all times.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

IMPORTANT	**OF SOME IMPORTANCE**
QUITE IMPORTANT	
VERY IMPORTANT	**NOT IMPORTANT**

Considering each of the 35 value cards, think about how important each one is in your paid work

Sort them into columns allowing a maximum of 8 cards in the 'very important' column

Use the blank cards provided to create any extra cards that you wish, and discard any printed cards that seem irrelevant. Rank the cards in the 'very important' column in order of importance.

When you are happy with the sort, complete the table on the next page for paid work to provide a record of your work values at the current time.

This chart can be used as a checklist to compare any likely future work activities to your needs.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Work Values

	Very Important	Quite Important	Not Important
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

Your leisure values

Make a note of the things you do for leisure:

Repeat the card sort for leisure; some cards may need a little translation,

e.g. work alone = being alone.

When you have completed the sort, fill in the chart for leisure activities and consider how well your current activities fulfill the very important and important values.

	Very Important	Quite Important	Not Important
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

How values change with time

Our 'important' values are key motivators for our life journey, but these journeys and values change as a result of life events, experiences and our changing self-image.

Spend a few minutes noting under the following headings, which values you think were or will be most important at different ages:

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Age 18

Age 30

Age 45

Age 65

Looking back at these three 'value' exercises make a note of what you have learned about your values and needs.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Which of the values have changed with time and which have remained constant?
How well are you meeting your most important needs at work and in your leisure time?

Could this match be improved?

Transferable skills

Too much emphasis is paid to academic qualifications and not enough emphasis is paid to transferable skills. It is often difficult to fully identify the 'transferable skills' that we have because of the importance that is often placed on our role as a paid worker. We usually understand the skills that are directly related to our paid work, but it is more difficult to discover the underlying skills that really are transferable to other paid work and leisure activities in order to make our life more rewarding.

The following exercise is designed to help you to discover not only the skills that you have, but also the ones that you would like to use in future roles.

Over the page is another set of cards that you need to print off.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

P Drawing out people	T Hand-eye co-ordination	T Keeping physically fit
T Using hand tools	T Handling things with precision and speed	T Assembling things
T Fixing, repairing things	D Analysing, dissecting, sorting and sifting through information or things	T Building, constructing
T Muscular co-ordination	D Problem solving	T Finding out how things work
T Physically strong	D Reviewing, evaluating	T Driving car, motorbike
T Quick physical reactions	D Diagnosing, looking for problems	T Manual dexterity
T Using machine tools, sewing machine, lathe, power tools	D Organising, classifying	
D Reading for facts	D Following instructions, diagrams, blueprints	I Creating, innovating, seeing alternatives
D Researching, gathering information	I Working creatively with colours	I Sizing up a situation or person quickly and accurately
D Calculating, computing	I Fashioning or shaping things or materials	I Reading for ideas
D Memorising numbers	I Working creatively with spaces, shapes or faces	I Developing others' ideas

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

D Managing money, budgeting	I Composing music	I Conveying feelings or thoughts through body face and/or voice
D Examining, observing, surveying, an eye for detail and accuracy	I Improvising, adapting	I Writing creatively
D Taking an inventory	I Designing things, events, learning situations	P Conveying warmth and caring
P Helping others	P Taking first move in relationships	P Promoting change
P Giving credit to others, showing appreciation	P Motivating people	P Leading, directing others

Is your recruitment website still missing a piece?

Bookboon can optimize your current traffic. By offering our free eBooks in your look and feel, we build a qualitative database of potential candidates.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

P **Listening**	**P** **Organising people**	**P** **Showing sensitivity to others' feelings**
P **Selling, persuading, negotiating**	**P** **Teaching, training**	**P** **Performing in a group, on stage, in public, etc.**

VERY COMPETENT	COMPETENT
ADEQUATE FOR TASK	UNDEVELOPED

Exercise:

Layout the four heading cards and sort the rest of the cards under these headings according to competency

Use the blank cards to write on any skills not listed. Discard any that you feel are irrelevant

On the table over the page write down your skills under the headings 'very competent' and 'competent'

From the remaining three columns note onto the table any that you would like to develop, then put the cards in these three columns to one side

Sort the 'very competent' and 'competent' piles into skills that you would like to use a lot, sometimes, rarely and note these on the table.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Transferable skills

Very Competent	Competent	Want to use a great deal	Would like to develop
		Want to use sometimes	
		Want to use rarely or never	

The skills that you have identified as 'very competent and want to use a lot are your most transferable skills. Those that you have identified as 'competent' and want to use a lot are your next most transferable.

It does not mean that skills are not transferable because you do not want to use them. However, you will be less motivated to use these skills and find less satisfaction in using them.

Data, ideas, people and things

Each of the skill cards has a letter on it D I P T. Look at your most transferable cards and transfer the letters into your chart to see in which categories most of your skills lie.

Explanations of the categories can be found below and you may find it interesting to consider the types of work or leisure activities that your choices indicate will be most rewarding for you.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

On the blank sheet that follows make a note about what you have learned about your transferable skills and which types of work or leisure activities will be most rewarding for you.

D = Data

These represent the kink of skills required to record, communicate, evaluate and organise facts or data about goods and services. People who like using these skills typically enjoy working with figures, systems and routines.

I = Ideas

These represent skills used in being creative, designing conceptual models and systems, experimenting with words, figures, music. People who like using these skills typically enjoy creating, discovering, interpreting, abstract thinking and synthesising.

P = People

These represent skills used in helping, informing, teaching, serving, persuading, entertaining, motivating, selling and directing other people. People who use these skills like to work for changes in other people's behaviour.

Turning a challenge into a learning curve.
Just another day at the office for a high performer.

Accenture Boot Camp – your toughest test yet

Choose Accenture for a career where the variety of opportunities and challenges allows you to make a difference every day. A place where you can develop your potential and grow professionally, working alongside talented colleagues. The only place where you can learn from our unrivalled experience, while helping our global clients achieve high performance. If this is your idea of a typical working day, then Accenture is the place to be.

It all starts at Boot Camp. It's 48 hours that will stimulate your mind and enhance your career prospects. You'll spend time with other students, top Accenture Consultants and special guests. An inspirational two days packed with intellectual challenges and activities designed to let you discover what it really means to be a high performer in business. We can't tell you everything about Boot Camp, but expect a fast-paced, exhilarating and intense learning experience. It could be your toughest test yet, which is exactly what will make it your biggest opportunity.

Find out more and apply online.

Visit accenture.com/bootcamp
• Consulting • Technology • Outsourcing

accenture
High performance. Delivered.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

T = Things

These represent skills used in making, repairing, transporting, servicing. People with these skills like using tools and machinery and understanding how things work.

Building the vision

You now have all the necessary components to build your vision for your future life. You know what has worked well in the past from your lifeline, you know what values you want from work and leisure and you know what transferable skills you have that you want to use. Your next step is to write your fantasy life. Consider your life as a whole and outline your perfect life including pattern of work, where you would live, integration of work, home and social life, status, income, life style, etc.

Once you have written your fantasy life you need to ask yourself some questions.

- What are the differences between fantasy and reality?
- How much of the fantasy might be achievable now or in the future?
- What are the barriers to achieving some of the fantasy?
- How might these be overcome?
- What consequences would there be for you and others in working towards these features?
- Would the pursuit of these features of the fantasy be worth the consequences?
- What objectives would you like to set for yourself on the basis of this exercise?

Having used this process with a large number of people one thing has consistently come out of the process. Although the gap between fantasy and reality may be large or it may be small, everyone seems able to identify a path to achieving that fantasy life. The next stage in the process is to develop the other skills to enable vision to move forward to reality.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

5 Building skills to implement the vision

Not only has the previous chapter produced a vision, but it should also have increased your self-awareness. No longer are you judging yourself by external values, but by what you truly want and believe in. You now have your understanding of your skills rather than some other person's evaluation based on academic qualifications and your performance against the skill set that they require. You also know what values you need to satisfy in order to be satisfied with your work and home life rather than accepting the values of your peers.

What you now need is the confidence to implement the vision. Some people would argue that once you know what you want then you should simply go for it. They will come out with trite comments such as 'life is not a rehearsal'! But, as we have already seen, going it alone requires the confidence to go against years of external conditioning. Even simple steps such as telling your friends you are not going to the bar every Friday night anymore can be daunting. So let's look at ways of building confidence.

Firstly, it is important not to think of self-confidence as perfection. We all make mistakes and the person that didn't ever make a mistake probably didn't make anything. But you will have done a lot of things right in your life and they are things of which you should be proud. So start by making a list of all of your successes. Keep it handy, remind yourself regularly and add to it whenever you can.

Learn to speak up at work or in leisure activities. Set yourself the objective of speaking at least once in a staff meeting or in a group discussion with friends. Try and prepare for it. So if you know that your friends are likely to ask what you should all do, think of something and be prepared to voice it rather than go along with what others say. Be prepared to support your suggestion with a reasoned argument.

A person that lacks confidence often finds fault with himself or herself. They don't like their hair, they don't think they are as funny as other people or they don't think they are as good at their job as the next person for example. As well as accentuating the successes it is often necessary to confront the negatives. Too many people use negatives as an excuse for inaction.

Ask yourself why you feel this way and ask yourself what evidence you have for feeling that way. Often the negative is formed because of accepted norms from sources such as media or from putdowns from within your social peers. Just think how many people think they are fat because of the increase in size zero models in magazines and on television.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Ask yourself how any of these things can stop you achieving your vision. Will bad hair really stop you achieving your vision or are you looking for an excuse? If it really will damage your vision then get a good hairdresser, otherwise let it go and follow the vision. The same is true for all of the other negatives.

Another thing that will help to eliminate the negatives is a clearer understanding of failure and failing. Too many people see themselves as failure rather than recognizing that failure is an event not a person. Unfortunately the Western World has developed a belief that success is everything and everything has to produce a success.

In reality, most successes came from a succession of failures from which information was gleaned and future attempts were defined. As Edison once said, he didn't fail ten thousand times when inventing the light bulb; he just found ten thousand ways that didn't work. Had he lived in today's world he would probably have given up and we would all still be using candles!

So this means that we have to re-programme the way we look at negatives and failure. We have to recognise that there will always be negatives and there will always be failures. The important thing is how to turn negatives into positives and how to learn from failures.

Self-confidence is about being positive about you; it is about not being afraid to try and it is about being able to learn from failure if it happens rather than retreating to the corner and adopting the foetal position.

The Wake
the only emission we want to leave behind
Low-speed Engines Medium-speed Engines Turbochargers Propellers Propulsion Packages PrimeServ
The design of eco-friendly marine power and propulsion solutions is crucial for MAN Diesel & Turbo.
Power competencies are offered with the world's largest engine programme – having outputs spanning from 450 to 87,220 kW per engine. Get up front!
Find out more at www.mandieselturbo.com
Engineering the Future – since 1758.
MAN Diesel & Turbo
MAN

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Another aspect of lacking in self-confidence is the unwillingness to take compliments. Too often people lacking confidence will brush off compliments or make self-depreciating jokes to cover their embarrassment. Next time you receive a compliment, thank the person and accept it gracefully.

I personally have never been a great advocate of confidence building exercises that involve activities with groups such as standing in a circle and trusting the group to catch you as you fall backwards. Neither do I favour being asked to accomplish some difficult physical task up the side of a mountain where all of the team must trust each other in order to succeed.

However, I did find a solitary activity some years back that certainly did boost my self-confidence immensely. I had been going through a bad time and was not feeling very happy with myself. In fact I was subconsciously blaming myself for most of my problems and deciding that I deserved all of the badness.

Then suddenly, one night as I led in bed I decided not to evaluate my entire past life as this was too big a task. In any case there was nothing I could do to change it. Instead I decided to simply evaluate that day. I asked myself what had happened; how hard I had worked, had I been lazy, how did I treat others etc. At the end of the evaluation I decided that for that day I quite liked me!

For the next few weeks I continued the evaluation and the results came out the same pretty well every night. Occasionally I may feel that I had not been very nice to someone and this caused me to plan to improve that particular thing. Sometimes I may have felt that I had not been as thorough at work as I should have been and I planned to improve that.

But the primary effect of the exercise was that I stopped feeling negative about myself and realised that, like most people, I wasn't very bad and that I quite liked me. It also gave me daily feedback on where I had slipped below my desired standard (not failure) and it gave me a chance to learn from it and improve.

So I would recommend this as an exercise in increasing your self-confidence. It is something that takes a couple of minutes every night and it has the added benefit of increasing the likelihood of a good night's sleep!

I am also a strong believer in the power of positive thinking. Someone once said that if you believed that you would succeed you were probably right and that if you believed you would fail you were probably also right!

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

A perfect example of this came when I was working on this book whilst consulting in central Turkey. In this town there was always heavy traffic and people spent hours driving around looking for a space to park. The person I was with related that whenever he went into the centre of town he always found a parking space near to where he wanted to go. It happened so regularly that he began to wonder if he was psychic or living in a parallel universe.

One day he suggested to his friend that they go into town. His friend pointed out that there would not be anywhere to park but my friend stated that there would be a place. They went into town and my friend was right; there was a space right outside where they wanted to go. This happened several times and the friend was amazed.

One day the other person decided to drive even though they still believed that there would not be a space for them. Sure enough, as they drove around the person could not find a space. My friend looked at what was happening and realised that there where spaces but that the other person was not seeing them. My friend also realised that he was not living in a parallel universe!

What was happening was that when my friend drove around he expected to find a space and hence he saw the spaces. The other person expected not to find a space and hence was looking at the rows of full spaces rather than the empty ones. In other words, they were both looking to fulfill their expectations whether positive or negative.

Another aspect of training the entrepreneurial mindset relates to risk and failure. I came across a quote recently that said that 'A ship in port is safe…but that is not what ships were designed for'! How often do we fail to try because it is safer not to try? More importantly, how often do we inhibit our children by not letting them try for fear that they may not succeed?

The Western business culture has created a society that is totally risk averse and where people feel the need to win much more strongly than the need to learn from attempting. Too many people brag about their children's achievements as if they were their own achievements whilst trying to hide the times when the child does not succeed.

Even worse, parents increasingly attempt to remove children from situations where they may not succeed and create an environment where 'don't do that' has replaced 'lets give it a go'! Children are discouraged from exploring through physical play activities such that activities I remember like climbing trees and playing cricket in the yard are disappearing entirely from Western culture!

This refusal to try for fear of failure has also helped to create the convenience society; or perhaps the convenience society has helped to create the risk adverse society! Either way, we have come from a world where culinary experimentation has been replaced by fast food that is the same anywhere in the world!

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Gone are the days of the brave explorers and early holiday makers who would bravely travel to other countries where they would go off and explore the surrounding sights and would eat local food whilst staying in a local hostel. Now people play safe with mass holiday resorts that are all-inclusive with little local food and where trips are sanitised and delivered by professional tour companies.

I recently discussed a possible trip with a local tour representative where I live, as it was a wonderful combination of quality culture in the most impressive archeological setting at an exceptionally reasonable price. The tour representative agreed with me but pointed out that they could not engage in the trip as it had not been 'health and safety reviewed'! The particular site has been used for events for some 2000 years and I bet the Romans didn't have the place health and safety checked.

We also see fear of failure and lack of risk taking in the workplaces of the Western world. People are getting to work earlier and earlier so as not to be seen as the last one in the office. Then they stay later and later so that they are not the first to leave. Even then they refuse to relax and continue to work on laptops, tablets and smart phones all of the way home.

Does anyone stop and think how much cleverer they would appear if they were to arrive at the normal time and finish on time with all of their work done and without the need to work on the way home? How much more impressive it is that you can accomplish the same as your colleagues in so much less time.

Brain power
By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.
Up to 25 % of the generating costs relate to maintenance. These can be reduced dramatically thanks to our systems for on-line condition monitoring and automatic lubrication. We help make it more economical to create cleaner, cheaper energy out of thin air.
By sharing our experience, expertise, and creativity, industries can boost performance beyond expectations.
Therefore we need the best employees who can meet this challenge!
The Power of Knowledge Engineering
Plug into The Power of Knowledge Engineering.
Visit us at www.skf.com/knowledge
SKF

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

There are also other clear benefits to this approach. Suddenly you get home in time to see your children while they are still awake. You are fresher and much more willing to engage in real play rather than abdicating your parenting responsibilities to bulk training by schools and child-minders. Go back to the days of your parents when mums and dads made up stories instead of leaving television cartoon characters to do your work.

With a bit of light supervision children can get so much stimulation from learning to ride a bicycle with their parents; from activities where first time success is very unlikely but where life lessons can be learnt. These lessons cannot be learnt when their only mode of transport is the back seat of the SUV!

It is interesting to note that a British survey conducted by the London School of Economics discovered that only just over half of young people over five owned a bicycle and less than half of them actually used it. This is despite a massive increase in cycle ways and the encouragement of cycling success in the Olympics and the Tour de France by British riders. And yet, well over 50% of 5–10 year olds in Britain had a mobile telephone as far back as 2006!

While there is clearly a need to address the education of our children in order to create the sort of entrepreneurial mindsets that we need for the future and in order to give them the best chance for a stimulating and meaningful life, this cannot be achieved unless we change the way that we ourselves look at life.

One exercise that you should try is to make a list of all of the things that you would really like to do while you are fit enough to do so. Then list alongside of them the reasons why you could not do them. Ask yourself what the worst thing is that could happen if you tried to do these things. Then ask yourself 'SO WHAT!'

My wife is a great example of using this approach when faced with potentially fearful situations. I well remember an occasion a couple of years ago when we were having a short break in the Cappadocia region of Turkey. With it's fantastic landscape dotted with volcanic fairy chimneys it was crying out for a hot air balloon trip. My wife was not particularly keen on sitting in a wicker basket at 500 feet with only a gas bottle and the wind for navigation.

However, when she looked at the reasons why she could not do this she found that she had all of the physical attributes to take part in a balloon flight and records showed that there was little risk given the safety record of this company. Moreover, she was prepared to try in the hope that she would enjoy it and to make sure I went and enjoyed it. By overcoming the fear she found that the experience was sensational and she is now the biggest advocate for hot air balloon flights over Cappadocia!

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Moreover, she has repeated this approach and has used it to overcome fears that have led to swimming with stingrays, swimming with dolphins, establishing an international lunch club on her own, not to mention moving homes from one continent to another in three months. And before you start to imagine someone in her twenties or early thirties, she has children that are all grown up as well as two grandchildren!

The other attribute that is essential if you are to benefit from an entrepreneurial approach is the willingness to work hard to achieve things. Contrary to the impressions created by reality television, luck isn't just something that happens. I love the quote that 'The harder I work the luckier I get!' Once you have overcome the fear and have gained the confidence to have a go then you need to put maximum energy into it.

Failure to do so usually means that there is a confidence problem or that there is still a fear of failure that prevents a wholehearted attempt. In other words you can say that 'you tried' as if that is enough. But that is a bit like those people that buy all of the right clothing for skiing but then simply stand around and enjoy the evening parties but never ski. No, you did not go skiing; you went to parties in ski clothing as if it was fancy dress!

In his book Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell he spends some time discussing the concept of 10,000 hours. The discussion dismissing the concept that genius is born and not made. Whether it is classical soloist musicians, people like Bill Gates or the Beatles, tracing their history shows that they worked incredibly hard in order to become instant successes. He even managed to make the case that the boy composer, Mozart, had to complete his 10,000 hours before he started to write really good musical pieces.

No one is saying that simply by doing something for 10,000 hours you will become a star. Certainly, trying to win on X-Factor on the basis of a drunken karaoke performance will not do so. But life is not all about being a celebrity or the best in the world at disciplines defined by others. This book is about being successful in whatever you choose to do as defined by your own standards and desires.

It is about not being afraid to define a vision for yourself; it is about believing in yourself; it is about having the self-esteem and confidence to chase the vision; it is about being prepared to take risks and not to be afraid to fail, it is about getting up and trying again and it is about being prepared to work hard in order to make things happen. Most importantly, it is about taking control of your own destiny and not allowing society, parents, convention or anything else to control it for you.

Mark Twain once said; **"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."**

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

6 Entrepreneurship in action

Most books on entrepreneurship invariably focus on the well-known entrepreneurs and they are usually business related. However, throughout the book I have emphasized that we are all born with the potential to think entrepreneurially. There was a study done that measured divergent thinking in children and they were measured at three times in their school life. When measured at 5 years old 98% measured high on divergent thinking capability. This dramatically reduced over the next ten years, demonstrating that we are educating it out of children.

Therefore it was important to me that the examples that I finish with are what most would call 'ordinary' people. I will explain why I say most people would call them ordinary after I have shared their stories.

The reluctant academic

This particular man was known to be particularly clever academically, was a member of Mensa and at the age of eight he moved to the class a year ahead and stayed there for the remainder of his school life. This meant finishing at 17 years old. Rather than go straight to university he took a year off. (What would now be termed a gap year.)

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

After a summer floating around Europe he returned to England, and needing work he started in a bar. This led to going into partnership with someone to have their own bar and when the need arose to increase income he found a temping job at a major IT company whilst still keeping his interest in the bar. Not content to simply go to work and temp he started to get educated in IT issues and soon was in even more demand from the IT Company.

When the temp agency refused to increase his wages he started his own company and contracted directly with the IT Company. Soon he was in demand and he found himself headhunted. Having worked for major companies at home and abroad he now has a good job in the City of London. When he first reached a salary of five figures doing what he enjoyed doing he asked his father if he still needed to go to university!

This is a case of believing in yourself, having the confidence to try what you wanted rather than what everyone expected, to take risks and to be prepared to work hard to achieve the vision.

The successful loner

This man was well educated, from a good middle class home and with all of the social skills and education to make his way in the world at university and in the social sets. He was the sort of person that aunties and uncles loved. He was well dressed, well spoken and ideal to wheel out for social engagements and family gatherings.

But because he was well dressed and well spoken no one recognised that his true happiness came from working not as a team but on his own. His love was not social gatherings but numbers. He was very adept at computing and his ideal was to do numbers on his computer.

So, much to the dismay of those around him he dropped out of university and took a number of jobs that gave him the chance to work with numbers, spreadsheet reports and financials. Suddenly he was doing much more of what pleased him, but still he was often working in a team.

Given that his solitary way of working was coupled with a reticence to take orders and commands from others, it was natural that he should think about running his own business. A few years on he now has his own accounting business where he can exercise his passion daily and can control his own life.

The hardworking dreamer

In the interests of equality I am please to include women in the entrepreneurial cases. This woman went on holiday to the sunshine and whilst there she discussed with her travelling companion the dissatisfaction with her life so far. She wished that she could work in sunny places as something like the holiday representative they kept seeing.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

When she returned from holiday she set about trying to find out about how to become a holiday representative and discovered a course that could be taken on line. The course offered interviews with three top companies if she scored highly enough on the course.

She worked at the course every opportunity she had and even used a mentor on occasions. At the end of the course she had worked hard enough to score 96% and she went for the first of her interviews. After a day of interviews and evaluations she was offered a job.

Less than a year after she had sat on the beach dreaming, her hard work resulted in her departing to the South of France on her first assignment. Several assignments later she has been to several countries and still works hard at enjoying the dream that she made reality.

The immovable woman

The second of the women in this group of ordinary people was the other woman on that beach discussing dreams. She was someone that had lived all of her life within 15 kilometres from where she was born. Everyone assumed that she would always live there and few knew that she had come so close in the past to opportunities to leave her native country.

Her husband was lucky enough to travel the world with his job and was content to travel backwards and forwards to see her. But once she articulated her dream to the other woman on the beach it was there in her mind. So the next time she was due to meet up with her husband she went to him.

After two weeks with her husband in another country she discussed and agreed with her husband that they should make their home where he was now working. This would save travelling and would mean they were together and not separated by two continents.

So home she went and, again by hard work, she sold and got rid of all material possessions, she sold the car and she sold the house. All of this was achieved in three months and she left her native country two weeks before the other woman took up her first holiday representative job. Interestingly, through hard work, a self-belief and self-confidence they both achieved their dreams within ten months of the chat on the beach.

As I said at the start of this section, in many ways these people are ordinary people that achieved their dreams through the very characteristics that we have talked about in this book. However, I also said that they were 'apparently' ordinary. To anyone that reads this book I hope they will be seen this way and that they will act as an inspiration to the reader to also behave entrepreneurially.

However, to me they are extraordinary because the brave lady in the last example is my lovely wife and the other three are our children. What the four of them achieved they did themselves, but in doing so they gave me more opportunity to see my beliefs in action and for that I thank them all.

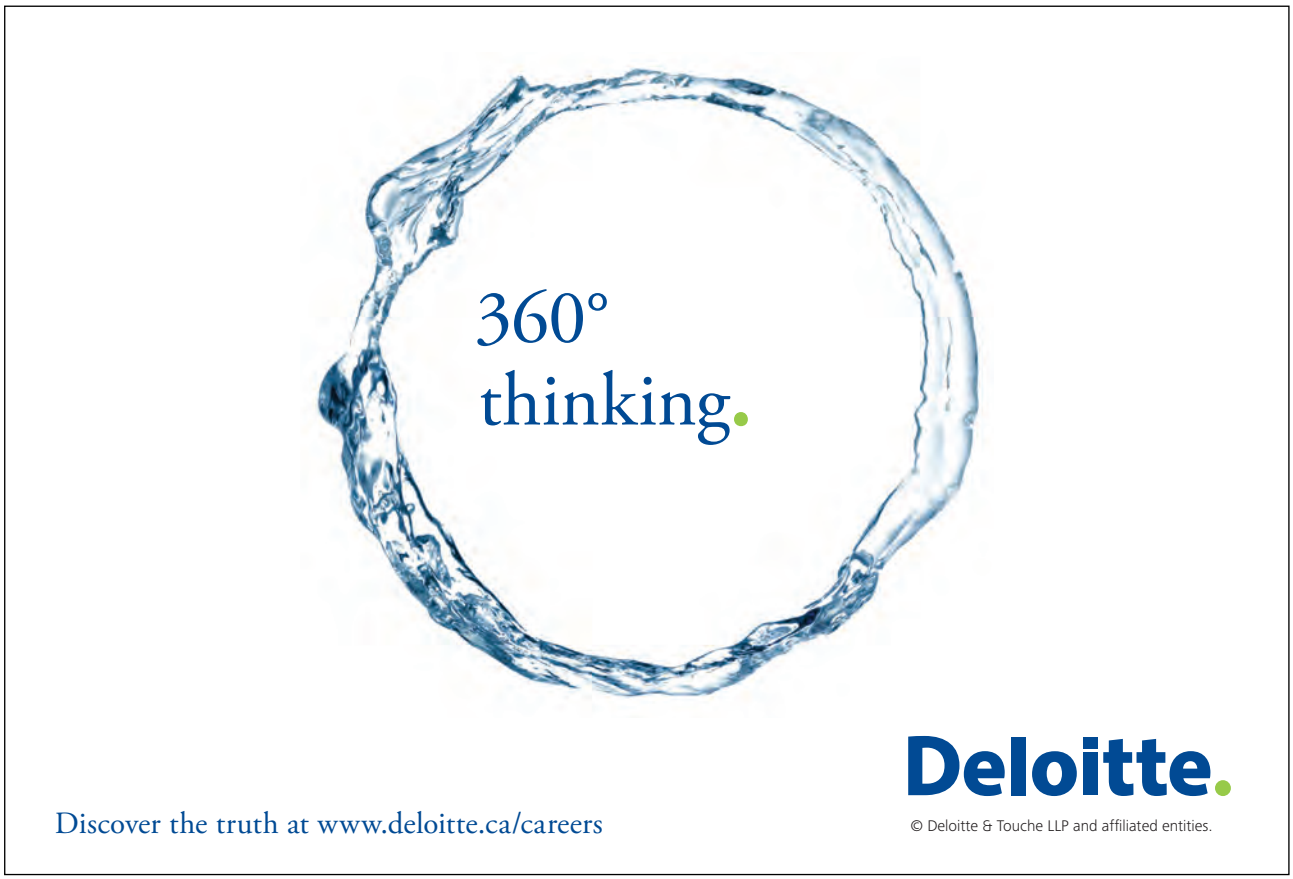
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

7 Conclusion

When I started this book I made it clear that the contents were based on my real life experiences and that you should not expect the traditional theories of entrepreneurship regurgitated. I hope that I have been true to that objective and that you can find things that resonate within your own life.

What has become clear to me over the years is that, at a time when the world is changing so rapidly that we need entrepreneurial thinking to maximize the benefits, we are in danger of educating these skills from our children. If we are not careful we could evolve into a race of risk adverse individuals that do as they are told and suffer terminal boredom.

Of course this will never happen in reality, as there is something in the human makeup of some people that will not always let the creative part of them be removed. They are the fortunate ones that enjoy a fulfilling and stimulating life following their dreams.



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

But all of us have the chance to be one of those people; to have a stimulating and fulfilling life; to follow their dreams and to seize opportunities as they arise. Entrepreneurial opportunities are around us all of the time. The cry should be 'why not me?' instead of 'why me?' We should learn to look around rather than always straight ahead. We should stop trying to be a second rate version of others and become a first rate version of ourselves.

Too many people believe that it is difficult to change. Certainly, if you are tied to material possessions and external status and such other things then it could be hard. But if we value ourselves and we value having a fulfilling life then it becomes easy.

In my own case the first step on my road to enjoying every minute of my life came with as simple a thing as a bar of chocolate. I was at primary school and one of the large chocolate manufacturers was running an essay competition for schools. With chocolate as the prizes for the first six places this was my sort of competition.

I was known to be one of the better children in the class and so I hoped for one of the prizes although a girl called Bridie was expected to take first prize as she always came top of the class.

I remember when the results were read out and my disappointment at not getting any of the prizes from 6th down to second. I really thought that perhaps the quite big box for second would have gone to me. As I waited for Bridie's name to be called I could not believe it when I heard my own name. This was the moment when I realised that I did not have to settle for second place and that if I wanted something and I gave it my all then 'why not?'

From then on my life has been a succession of opportunities that have led to other things that have all brought me satisfaction and fulfillment. I was the first boy from my junior school to pass the grammar school entrance examination. I got my first choice university. I got a teaching job in the town I wanted two days after qualifying. When I was offered the chance to teach computer studies I took it not knowing where it would lead.

When I left teaching the computer studies helped me to get a job with a major IT company that lasted for twenty years. During that time I became a director of a business agency for SMEs as part of our community activities. This lasted for ten years and gave me the skills that enabled me to become chief executive of a business agency in my hometown.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

During this time I was asked to become the chair of a large NGO in my spare time that led to me becoming a consultant for an organisation supporting NGOs. All of these experiences of business were brought together when I saw a request on an email to work as an international consultant. Having got that position other jobs followed as well as university lecturing opportunities. Who would have believed that I could walk into universities and present on 'Failure is an Option'.

Having been once asked to appear in a business programme In my innocence I grabbed it. Despite it being nerve-racking it started off a media career that has involved radio, television and written media in several European and Middle Eastern countries.

In between all of this I managed to fit in twenty years as a class one soccer referee, not to mention twelve ballroom and Latin dance examinations.

In short, a boy born on the wrong side of the tracks, who never had anything other than secondhand clothes and shoes until he was in his teens, learnt that lack of material things didn't have to mean failure. I learnt that you don't have to aim for second. Go for first place; keep your eyes open and if the opportunity is there then grasp it.

When I lecture I always leave the listener, or in this case the reader, with two thoughts.

MSM
MAASTRICHT SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
Increase your impact with MSM Executive Education
For almost 60 years Maastricht School of Management has been enhancing the management capacity of professionals and organizations around the world through state-of-the-art management education.
Our broad range of Open Enrollment Executive Programs offers you a unique interactive, stimulating and multicultural learning experience.
Be prepared for tomorrow's management challenges and apply today.
For more information, visit www.msm.nl or contact us at +31 43 38 70 808 or via admissions@msm.nl
the globally networked management school

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Firstly:

> There are three types of people in this world
> There are those that make things happen
> There are those that watch things happen
> And there are those that say 'WHAT HAPPENED'

This book is designed to make you one of the first.

Secondly:

> Remember the Bumble Bee!

If you go to university and study aerodynamics you will discover that the Bumble Bee's body is too heavy, it is the wrong shape, its wings are to small and they flap to slowly. In other words, according to the laws of aerodynamics he cannot fly! And yet he does!

He flies for two reasons. Firstly he did not waste three years in university listening to a professor talking about aerodynamics and secondly he flew because he believed he could!

If you believe you can fly then don't let anyone stop you, especially yourself!

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

8 References

Peter Kilby, 1971, Hunting for the Heffalump, Wesleyan University – Department of Economics

Malcolm Gladwell, 2008, Outliers – The Story of Success, Little, Brown and Company

Derek Gillard, Education in England: a brief history, educationinengland.org.uk

Edward Jarvis, 1872, The Relation of Education to Insanity, The United States Office of Education